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The Cuban Invasion—II

Rebels' Defeat Is Ascribed to Errors In Plan and Execution in Washington

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By HANSON W. BALDWIN

This is the second of two articles on the unsuccessful attempt by anti-Castro forces to invade Cuba last April.

THE invasion of Cuba last April, it is now clear, was lost in Washington.

The small invading force was adjudged shortly before the operation, in a written report submitted by a Colonel Hawkins of the Marine Corps, to be "battleworthy" and comparatively almost as well equipped as a similar United States unit. This judgment had some effect in Washington and, observers contend, was borne out by the actual fighting.

News Analysis
Despite the casualty statistics (some 1,200 of the 1,500 to 1,600 captured), the invaders gave a good account of themselves. Most sources agree that the refugees fought well until their ammunition ran out, that they inflicted more casualties on Fidel Castro's forces than he had conceded, and that the Cuban militia in the area of the landing almost immediately defected in scores to the invaders' side only to defect back again to Dr. Castro after the failure of the invasion became obvious.

Like the British and French invasion of Port Said during the Suez crisis of 1956, the Cuban operational plans and their execution were flawed from the start.

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intelligence Agency. The agency made mistakes in planning, execution and judgment. Allen W. Dulles, its director, and Richard M. Bissell, the deputy for plans and operations and in direct charge of the Cuban affairs, will probably bear the burden of failure by resigning their offices.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff made mistakes in failing to be candid and emphatic in not pointing the table enough and in failing to commit all their ideas and viewpoints to paper. (In the interests of secrecy much of the Cuban planning and direction was oral.)

The White House believes the military judgments were faulty and the studies inadequate, but Pentagon sources deny this.

The State Department and other agencies bear responsibility for contributing to confusion and defeat by insisting upon legalisms that the gritty conscience of a democracy so often demands when it resorts to naked force.

McGeorge Bundy, a Presidential assistant, shares, and magnificently has accepted blame for insufficiently emphasizing to the President the dangerous

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failure, and all the psychological and political disadvantages associated with the term "Unkee Imperialism." And our backing of the Cuban refugees was so thinly disguised that it immediately exposed Washington to the same charges we would have faced had United States armed forces been employed.

The second great lesson of Cuba is the importance of tight policy, control, direction and management of any venture involving the application of military power, no matter how small. This control and management must center in the President as Commander in Chief, each President will use the machinery of government differently, but history has shown that ordered discussions and debates and staff work and recorded decisions may bring new insight and prevent major mistakes. These procedures were largely lacking in the Kennedy Administration prior to the time of the Cuban invasion.

A third lesson of Cuba is that no military or paramilitary operation should be under the control of the Central Intelligence Agency if it is of such a size and character that it is bound to become overt or open rather than covert or secret. Operations of the size of the Cuban invasion should be managed by the Defense Department, which is far better staffed and has more expert military knowledge than the C. I. A.

Another lesson is the necessity of keeping all secret intelligence activities and operations under constant top-level surveillance and review. Machinery

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